A Theology vol 92.

# SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE CHAPEL AT ROSE CASTLE,

AT A

PUBLIC ORDINATION OF PRIESTS AND DEACONS,

On SUNDAY, Auguſt 17, 1788.

---

By the Rev. BROWNE GRISDALE, D.D.
CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.

---

PUBLISHED BY COMMAND OF

The Right Rev. the LORD BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

---

LONDON:
PRINTED BY A. STRAHAN;
FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.
MDCCLXXXIX.

92

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

# J O H N,

BY DIVINE PERMISSION,

LORD BISHOP OF CARLISLE,

THIS DISCOURSE,

PUBLISHED IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS LORDSHIP's COMMAND,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

HIS LORDSHIP's

MOST DUTIFUL AND OBLIGED

SERVANT AND CHAPLAIN,

BROWNE GRISDALE.

A

# SERMON.

1 CORINTHIANS, IV. 2.

MOREOVER, IT IS REQUIRED IN STEWARDS, THAT A MAN BE FOUND FAITHFUL.

THERE is not a rule in morality more obvious and more inconteſtable, than that it is indiſpenſably incumbent on every perſon to fulfil the duties of the ſtation in which Providence has placed him. From the acknowledged truth of this principle, the declaration in our text derives the juſteſt authority; and I believe no one will pretend to deny, though too many ſeem to forget, its obligation.

St. Paul having, in the preceding part of this Epiſtle, explained the true nature of the miniſterial office, and vindicated the Apoſtles from the aſperſions of ſome partial and contentious hearers, in the beginning of this chapter, ſhews in what light they ought to be held and eſteemed by the people. "Let a man ſo account of us as the miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God." They are the ſervants of Chriſt; yet the Apoſtle, in calling them ſtewards, manifeſtly conſiders them as a higher order of ſervants,

to whom more is committed. Every ſervant in the family is obliged to ſhew faithfulneſs in his proper place; but the ſteward of the family, who is intruſted with the care of all the reſt, is peculiarly obliged, and in a degree ſuperior to any other. Hence we find it emphatically added, "Moreover, it is required in ſtewards, that a man be found faithful *."

From theſe words I ſhall take occaſion, firſt, to ſhew in what ſenſe this office is aſcribed to us; and then to urge ſome of the obligations we are under to fidelity in it.

As ſtewards, the Clergy have ſomething to diſpenſe, ſomething of which due care is to be taken: the buſineſs intruſted to them is that of Religion, which, to beings, who in the midſt of life are in death, is infinitely the moſt important concern; they are to preſerve and propagate the knowledge of it; and the people are to learn the

* Salvator noſter, Luc. xii. 42. in œconomo fidelitatem cum prudentiâ requirit. Omittit Paulus prudentiam, non quòd ſine eâ villa vel domus rectè queat adminiſtrari; ſed quòd juſtitia et fides præcipuam habeant in diſpenſatore laudem. Quò enim quis plus valebit intelligentiâ, hóc nequior erit & ad fraudem paratior, demptâ fide herique et conſervorum caritate. Qui fideliter munere ſuo fungitur, etiamſi imprudentiâ lapſus quid peccet, faciliùs errori ſuo veniam impetrabit, quam qui perfidiæ crimine ſe obſtrinxit. Denique in Evangelico negotio ſola nobis diligentiæ gloria relicta eſt. Quid enim loci eſſe queat ingenio in myſteriis divinis (de his autem ſolis non de aliis hîc loquitur Apoſtolus), in quibus non excogitandis vel innovandis, ſed ſincerè & fideliter, quæ et qualia accepimus, tradendis, omnis noſtra occupari debet induſtria. Cæterùm quod Apoſtolus unam fidelitatem in œconomo requiri ait, operæ pretium eſſe arbitror, præclara Ciceronis verba conferre, quibus vix reperias, quod ad Paulinæ ſententiæ ſimilitudinem propiùs accedat, magiſve eam illuſtret. Orat. pro Cn. Plancio. "Virtus, probitas, integritas in candidato, non linguæ volubilitas, non ars, non ſcientia requiri ſolet. Ut nos in mancipiis parandis, quamvis frugi hominem ſi pro fabro aut pro textore emimus, ferre moleſtè ſolemus, ſi eas artes, quas in emendo ſecuti ſumus, fortè neſciverit: ſin autem emimus, quem villicum imponeremus, quem pecori præficeremus, nihil in eo, niſi frugalitatem, laborem, vigilantiam eſſe curamus: ſic populus Romanus diligit magiſtratus quaſi reipublicæ villicos: in quibus ſi quâ præterea eſt ars, facile patitur; ſin minus, virtute eorum & continentiâ contentus eſt." RAPHELIUS.

law

law at their mouth; they are to adminiſter ſacred ordinances, and the means of grace; teaching every man, and warning every man, in that part of Chriſt's flock, which is committed to their care.

Every ſtep I take in contemplating the paſtoral office, I am ſtruck with the greatneſs of the momentous charge! We are ſtewards of "the myſteries of God;" more particularly of the myſtery, hid from ages under a cloud of types and figures, with, now and then, a gleam of prophecy to cheer the long night, till at length the "Sun of Righteouſneſs aroſe." The ſum and ſubſtance of this myſtery is, the ſalvation of men by a Redeemer, on their repentance and converſion. We are to inculcate the doctrine of his atonement, as the principal ſubject of our preaching. The glory of God is manifeſted to us in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; that name, above every name, to which the nations bow: all the lines of Revelation meet in him as their centre; the whole building ſtands founded on him as the chief corner-ſtone. When daring empirics in Religion are ſo active in their endeavours to degrade the Saviour, this ſhould rouſe us to approve ourſelves his faithful ſervants, and tranſmit his honours, unſullied and undiminiſhed, through our hands.

We are, moreover, ſtewards of the holy ſcriptures: it is incumbent upon us diligently to learn their meaning and doctrines, that we may teach them to others, and rightly divide to God's houſehold the word of truth; we are to ſtudy the evidences, both external and internal, of the Goſpel revelation; we ſhould endeavour to be more and more maſters of the arguments for it, and be capable of ſupporting it againſt the numerous cavils, which the infidels of this and former ages have artfully and laborioufly raiſed in oppoſition to it.

There is ſcarcely any ſort of knowledge that hath not ſome connection with the knowledge of ſacred writ; and nothing is ſo becoming a Clergyman as an aſſiduous, and even critical ſtudy of it. We ſhould take, henceforward, this ineſtimable volume into our hands, as our inſeparable companion, and make its "ſtatutes our ſongs in the houſe of our pilgrimage *." More eſpecially, we are to ſtudy it as a rule of life. Amidſt the temptations of youth, the cares of manhood, and the languor of age, through all our difficult and dubious way, that Goſpel, which we preach, will be a "light to our feet, and a lanthern to our paths:" it is to be the text-book of all our public inſtructions; in it are recorded the κυριαι δοξαι of the Maſter of our ſect, the laws of our Saviour and King. Its admirable variety, its adorable depth, its chain of events deduced from eternity itſelf, the connection of its parts with each other, and of the whole with the general face of hiſtory and of the world; above all, its containing the ſcheme of our religion, and the charter of our redemption, renders it the book moſt intereſting to us, and moſt likely to improve the heart, and give ſatisfaction to the mind.

Beſides faithfulneſs to the Church of Chriſt in general, we ought never to forget, that we are to look upon ourſelves as ſtewards of the Church of England in particular. I know it is become a faſhionable thing to ſlight and neglect her diſcipline and doctrines; but it is a juſt and generous maxim of Solomon, "Hearken to thy father that begat thee, and deſpiſe not thy mother when ſhe is old †." Sure I am, that, of all Churches, this has the beſt claim of reſemblance to the primitive: her conſtitution is deeply, and, I truſt, unalterably, interwoven with that of our happy native land; we ſucked the firſt milk

* Pſalm cxix. 54. † Prov. xxiii. 22.

of

of evangelical truth from her breaſt; and ſhe has, ſo many ways, a peculiar right to our attachment, that, even if we erred a little in her favour, our prejudices would be laudable.

I might obſerve, that the eſtabliſhed Church is the only form of Religion that, in this country, is ſtrictly legal. I might obſerve, that the vows of God are upon us. If promiſes, if ſubſcriptions, if oaths can bind us, we have henceforth devoted our ſervices to her. But, ſtrong as theſe conſiderations are, I urge them not; what I would inſiſt upon, is, the intrinſic excellence of that Church, to which we belong. The more deeply a man ſearches into eccleſiaſtical antiquities, and the higher he traces the Chriſtian Church; or, in other words, the more learned he is, the more he will be ſatisfied of the near conformity of ours to the ancient model. The Church of Rome is a field, in which abundance of "tares" are mixed with the "wheat;" and ſome of the Proteſtant Churches, in pulling up the "tares," have pulled up much of the "wheat" alſo. But *our* Church was reformed with moderation and wiſdom; and we may ſafely affirm, that no nation was ever bleſſed with an eſtabliſhed Religion that is a ſafer way to ſalvation.

Its glory, indeed, as a national Church, is now very much obſcured by a growing neglect of its ordinances, and by numberleſs ſchiſms and diviſions: ſo that, when we contemplate it as a fair idea of a Church moſt venerable and apoſtolical, whoſe forms are admirably calculated for the edifying of ſouls, and for worſhipping God "in the beauty of holineſs," her true ſons are ready to take up the pathetic complaint of the daughters of Judah; "By the waters of Babylon we ſat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Sion*!"

* Pſalm cxxxvii. 1.

But it becomes *us*, ſtewards, to be found faithful; we ſhould point out to the people the *old paths*, and do this deſpiſed Church all the credit we can *.

Of late her religious intereſts ſeem to have ſuffered moſt from foes of her own houſe. Men of ſceptical and Socinian principles, who wiſhed to ſubvert the preſent eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, have leaped over its fences, and entered into its miniſtry. After publicly and deliberately declaring their unfeigned and full aſſent to the articles of faith of the Church, they have taken the firſt opportunity of ſhewing they diſbelieved them, by making them the ſubject of their ridicule. But the ſolemnity of their engagements cannot be laughed away; the guilt of their prevarication and treachery cannot be wiped out. What a ſtrange indifference does it ſhew to religious conſiderations in general, thus to wear a maſk, and get admittance in diſguiſe into a Church they diſapprove of! Their conduct muſt, I think, create in them great future uneaſineſs of mind. Theirs is a function in which it is ſome imputation to be only ſuſpected of duplicity; and its duties

* The reader who reliſhes plain truth will not be diſpleaſed with the following paſſage from a ſermon of Dr. Benjamin Calamy, on the 29th of May 1682:—"In order to the continuance of theſe great mercies to us which we this day bleſs God for, I know nothing more effectual than our conſcientious and conſtant adhering to the Church as it is now by law eſtabliſhed; a Church reformed with the graveſt and matureſt deliberation, by the advice and with the conſent of the upreme power, according to the word of God and the example of the beſt and primitive ages; whoſe doctrines are ſo orthodox, its liturgy ſo devout, its government ſo apoſtolical, its conſtitutions ſo reaſonable and uſeful, its ceremonies ſo few and decent, that no one can refuſe communion with it, but upon ſuch principles, which, if he holds them, ſhall equally oblige him to refuſe communion with all the ſettled Churches that are, or have been, in the Chriſtian world, excepting ſome few commonwealth Churches, but of very late years firſt invented and ſet up amongſt us: a Church moſt admirably fitted for the making men ſubſtantially good and pious, juſt and loyal, peaceable and charitable; that incroacheth not upon the right of Princes, nor impoſeth on the faith of Chriſtians; that hath moſt remarkably run the fate of, and ſtood or fell with the monarchy; which is the terror of Rome, and the bulwark of the Proteſtant cauſe and religion."

cannot

cannot be diſcharged, with honour or comfort, by men deſtitute of integrity and fidelity. Some of them alter, mutilate, and omit parts of the liturgy, contrary to law, and with a very ill effect on the minds of the people. Miſtaking their bold preſumption for ſuperior knowledge, they traduce the orthodox Clergy, and would repreſent them all either as guilty of groſs inſincerity, or as being ignorant bigots. But man, that is born of yeſterday, and knows ſo little, will not find novelty the ſureſt path to truth. Let us avail ourſelves of the wiſdom of former ages, and ſhew reſpect to thoſe doctrines and explanations of things, to which time has applied its teſt, and given its ſanction. Our Church does not cenſure or meddle with the opinions of other Proteſtant Churches; ſhe preſcribes only to her own children; and, by her Articles, provides only for her own peaceable conſent in thoſe doctrines of truth.

The care of the morals of the community reſts much upon the clergy, and may be ſaid to be their very buſineſs and calling; ſo that if they neglect this, it is no matter (as one obſerves) what they attend to. When we have ſtudied, and preached, and adminiſtered the holy offices of the Church, we ought not to imagine that we have diſcharged all that our function requires. A true and faithful Paſtor will conſider it as a principal part of his duty to be intimately acquainted with the individuals of his flock: he ſhould viſit the ſick with humane attention, and aid them in their conflict with the laſt enemy of miſerable man: he ſhould obtain and keep the eſteem of every inhabitant of his pariſh, in ſuch a manner, that the advice of their ſpiritual guide may, upon all occaſions, be acceptable to them. The influence of example will be indiſputably very great, eſpecially of an example reſident among them, and always before their eyes. The manners of a

good

good clergyman will tend to civilize a neighbourhood; his virtues will improve them; his piety will awaken their attention to ſecuring their immortal concerns.

Having laid before you ſome of the particulars in which our ſtewardſhip conſiſts, I ſhall proceed to the obligations we are under of faithfully diſcharging it.

Perhaps, to a virtuous and ſenſible man it will be a ſufficient motive, that this is his calling; the office, which Providence has allotted, and he himſelf has choſen to fill up in life. In this view, he will certainly feel it his duty to furniſh himſelf with the requiſite qualifications; and to acquit himſelf ably and honeſtly in his charge. He who is to "win ſouls" ſhould be "wiſe." He who is to diſtinguiſh truth from error, and to expound the oracles of Heaven, ſhould be a "workman that needeth not to be aſhamed*." Nothing ſo confounds and diſgraces a man as an acknowledged notoriety, that he is not fit for, and never has learned, the art he profeſſes. In no calling is ignorance more inexcuſable and detrimental to ſociety than in ours. But knowledge is not the only indiſpenſable requiſite. We muſt ſet forth God's true and lively word by our life as well as by our doctrine; and in all good works be "examples to believers." The world will always expect (and has a very juſt right to expect it) that our behaviour be blameleſs and regular, and more circumſpect than that of other men. There are ſome defects that peculiarly unqualify a man for his profeſſion: it is impoſſible to eſteem a ſoldier whom we know to be a coward; and infidelity itſelf muſt be ſhocked at a clergyman who is vicious and immoral. Such a teacher pulls down and diſhonours religion, while he pretends to build it up. Men will account our actions the true interpreters of our inward ſentiments.

* 2 Tim. ii. 15.

If our practice contradict our preaching, they will conclude we do not really believe what we say; and be tempted to call religion itself into question, and think it craft and delusion. Suppose a hearer objecting, "Physician of the Soul! thou hast given me good advice: The light of nature within me accords to the truth of thy precepts: But what amazes, what confounds me, is, that thy arguments do not seem to have convinced thyself, and have no influence on thy conduct." To such an objection what answer can be made? How can he persuade others to leave sin, who is himself its willing slave? How can he plant and water the grace of God in the souls of men, who is himself destitute of that grace? Most necessary, therefore, it is, that "priests should be clothed with righteousness *," and that they who bear "the vessels of the sanctuary" should be holy.

The dignity of our office is an obligation upon us. The function of those, who minister in things divine, has been looked upon with veneration in all ages. We find Homer, who very exactly paints men and manners, representing the whole Grecian camp as receiving with reverence one who came to them in the sacred habit of priesthood with the ensigns of his God in his hand,

——σκηπτρον και στεμμα θεοιο †.

This office among the Heathens required no study; it meddled not with teaching the people virtue; and still it was respected. On the Christian scheme, its dignity rises prodigiously. If there be reality in the far-extended hopes and fears of man; if the soul be superior to the body; and if things eternal ought to be preferred to those of time; then is the priesthood of the highest importance,

* Psalm cxxxii. 9. † An expression somewhat similar occurs in Exodus, iv. 20.

and moſt fit to be honoured. Honour is intended to dilate the energies of virtue, and to ſweeten the fatigues and difficulty of eminent ſtations. Ours is a poſt filled with much care and labour; it requires great intention of mind, and we have many eyes upon us. "A city ſet on an hill cannot be hid *." We muſt take the front of the battle againſt vice and impiety, and be doubly vigilant to ſubdue our own corruptions. Jeroboam's vile prieſts were good enough for his brutiſh deities: but the peculiar ſervants of God, and guides of his Church, ought to be perſons of moſt excellent endowments. The meaneſt ſtation about a king is honourable. What then muſt it be to ſtand in ſo near a relation to the King of Heaven and Earth, "beſides whom there is no God elſe; we know not any †?"

Another motive, that ſhould animate us in the duty of our miniſtry, is the pleaſantneſs and uſefulneſs of it to ourſelves. This work is, indeed, its own reward. It has been obſerved, that teaching is one of the moſt effectual ways of learning and fixing a thing in our own minds; and there is nothing it ſo much concerns us to learn, as thoſe truths which *we* are called to teach. All knowledge is pleaſant to the ſoul. It makes a man ſtand on higher ground than other men; it affords a far more laſting and ſatisfying delight than any ſenſual pleaſures. Need I tell you, what a variety of noble and intereſting objects are opened to us, while "we knock at the gates of wiſdom, and lift up our voice for underſtanding?" Called off from the eagerneſs of worldly purſuits, in which ſo many are abſorbed and loſt, we have leiſure, nay it is become our buſineſs, to ſtudy the will of our Creator, and the grounds of our acceptance with him. While we are ſearching after matter for the inſtruction of others, we

* Mat. v. 14.

† Iſaiah, xliv. 8.

cannot avoid collecting and applying ſome wiſe and excellent leſſons to ourſelves. That a virtuous and well-regulated life is attended with happy effects, and promotes every valuable intereſt we can have in proſpect, is a truth often diſputed in practice, but in theory perhaps never. Now, for the leading ſuch a life we have peculiar advantages. We are more out of the way of vice and temptation, and are under more checks and reſtraints than others: our profeſſion lays us under the happy neceſſity of ſpending much of our time and thoughts on Religion. Surely, the ſacred fire of devotion will ſometimes kindle within us, while we ſpeak with our tongue, and miniſter in holy things; and, if we hold communion with God in his work, inexpreſſible are the delights that will attend it; no work ſo purifies and ennobles the mind as this; we ſhall "go on our way rejoicing," conſcious that we are living to the beſt purpoſes, and that we have choſen the only true happineſs.

Another conſideration to be urged (an alarming one, I confeſs) is, that we muſt be reſponſible for our diſcharge of this office, in proportion to the importance of it. Men's minds need cultivation and inſtruction, as their bodies need food; and the opportunities for this are a main advantage they derive from ſocial life. Who has ever heard of a city without a temple? Nothing is ſo natural to man as Religion. When we ſurvey the maſs of mankind, and reflect in a courſe of how few years each of them will be called away to his final audit, where he muſt be aſſigned to an eternity of happineſs or woe, ſurely we muſt pronounce the care of the ſoul, "the one thing needful." It is our duty to remind them of this; as "Shepherds," we are to lead the flocks to the paſture, or we do not anſwer our name; as "Watchmen," we are to cry aloud from the watch-tower, and warn

the

the people of their danger, or they will "*die in their ſins, and their blood will be required at our hands* *."

It has been obſerved in political matters, that accepting a ſalary ſubjects the receiver to reſponſibility. Thoſe who in profeſſion take upon them this office, and beſtow little attention upon any part of it, except receiving the income, had better have been *hewers of wood* or *drawers of water*. The revenues of the Church are claimed by a ſacred tie; and for any individuals to get into poſſeſſion of them with mere temporal views, and to ſupport themſelves in indolence and luxury, is a manifeſt uſurpation and a horrid abuſe. "Should not the ſhepherds," ſaith the Prophet, "feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, ye clothe yourſelves with the wool; but ye feed not the flock †." A reproof without exaggeration, and ſimple, and yet how emphatical and ſevere! they have taken the wages, but have not performed the work; have accepted the rewards appropriated to the Paſtoral office, but have fulfilled none of the duties of it; this is ſomething worſe than robbery; it is blacker than common ſacrilege, and ſeems to want a name. Ye betrayers of the moſt ſacred of all truſts! how will you ſtand confounded when you ſhall appear in the preſence of the "*Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his ſheep?*"

We may go on in a careleſs indifference about our charge; but we have a moſt ſolemn account to give to the Chief and Prince of Shepherds, for loſing the part of his fold committed to our truſt, and whether any of them were loſt through our neglect. St. Paul, in all his charges to thoſe engaged in the miniſtry, labours to fix the thought of this future judgment on their minds: "I charge thee,"

* Ezek. iii. 18.

† Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3.

ſays

ſays he to Timothy, " before God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom: preach the word; be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-ſuffering and doctrine *."

As the day of final reckoning will be very terrible to the ſlothful and unfaithful, ſo, on the other hand, it is a ground of the higheſt encouragement and ſupport to faithful labourers in the Paſtoral office. I ſhall conclude with briefly reminding the latter of the glorious recompence that is ſet before them, a recompence, anſwerable to the magnificence of the Maſter they have ſerved. " They that are wiſe" (that is, Teachers, as our margin has it) " ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever †." If the miniſtry be their work, it deſerves their utmoſt exertions; they ſhould give themſelves wholly to it; for " bleſſed are thoſe ſervants whom their Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing."

In a little time this feeble breath of life will have ſpent its flame, and the days of their miniſtration will be over: when they " give an account of their ſtewardſhip," think you that the Almighty will repay them with a niggardly or penurious hand? Their ſpirits have been waſted in painful ſtudies; their brows were wet with the ſweat of their labours " in the paths of the Lord;" poſſibly, they met with little ſucceſs or regard from men; but they held out, through every diſcouragement; they accompliſhed their courſe of fidelity and obedience. And, at length, the voice of God himſelf proclaims, Good and faithful ſervants! ye have done your duty well; " enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

* 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. † Dan. xii. 3.

THE END.